

# Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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## ANVIL OR HAMMER

Count Von Buelow, the German Chancellor, said recently in a speech bearing upon the military development of the empire, that in the coming century Germany must either be anvil or hammer. This striking utterance reveals the policy of the world in an unusually clear light. His meaning was that if Germany was not strong enough to strike somebody else, somebody else would strike her. Security for the coming century lay not in equity or in righteousness, but in brute force. If her army and navy was strong enough to overawe other nations, strong enough, if the necessity arose, to invade and conquer them, she would be the hammer. In the Franco-Prussian war, poor France was the anvil and got many a sledge-hammer blow. It is better to be the hammer. The same law of human nature prevails in the lesser spheres of life. We find it in social life, in business, at all points, indeed, where men come in competition with each other. It is always a question of who shall be the upper and who the under dog, who the anvil and who the hammer. Two prize fighters go up against each other. The one who puts in the hardest and most skillful blows, who inflicts the greatest damage, is the hammer. The fellow who gets knocked out is the anvil. The hammer carries away the rewards. The same principle prevails in the more respectable walks of life. Men with superior gifts use them for their own advancement, and in most cases their own advancement means some one else's loss and hurt. Even in the most benevolent callings we witness the same phenomenon. The brilliant pulpit orator carries off the rich prizes, the easy situations, while his less gifted but perhaps more consecrated brother is sent to the hard fields.

Here lies one of the great problems which thoughtful men are trying to solve. How can the law of brotherhood, of co-operation, be substituted for the brutal law of competition? How can this hoary old controversy between the anvil and the hammer be brought to an end? The prophet set forth the law of Christ's kingdom in that striking statement that "the bruised reed he would not break, and the smoking flax he would not quench." That which was broken he would mend, and the flame which was feeble he would enkindle into a generous blaze. The law of the world is just the opposite. The broken reed is trampled under foot. The

smoking flax is quenched. It has been scientifically stated as "The Survival of the Fittest," meaning the strongest. The survival of the fittest according to this brutal law involves the extermination of the less fit. The lame, instead of being healed, must be "turned out of the way." Wolves fall upon and devour their wounded. It almost makes one believe the Darwinian doctrine of descent when we see this wolfish trait in human nature. It is the remains of the wolf era. The spirit of Christianity traverses this principle of the survival of the fittest. It proceeds upon the principle of making the less fit more fit, of making the weak strong, of making the poor rich. It goes to a man who has for several generations of him been kicked about the world, and trampled upon, and robbed, and constantly pumped dry of all his physical, mental, moral and spiritual powers; who, in the language of the German Chancellor has been, himself and his fathers before him, the anvil, perhaps for forty generations, until nearly all semblance of manhood is lost;—it goes to him in his despair, and puts into his heart the germ of a new life, the uplift of a new hope, the inspiration of a new idea, the light of a new vista, the enthusiasm of a new destiny; and that man arises out of the depths and stands upon God's glorious highlands, a redeemed man. The world's hammers had beaten him down, and always down; he was a bruised reed, a smoking flax; and the survival of the fittest plotted his total extermination. But Christ came to him, and behold the transformation.

The anvil and hammer business is likely to go on in the world for sometime to come yet, and it is the double mission of God's helpers, first, to bring in a better day, to hasten the dawn of the era of universal brotherhood, to break the hard face of the hammers; and secondly to remedy as far as possible the ever occurring, the widespread havoc and ruin, and to lighten as much as can be the despair, fruitful results of a world-system based upon self-seeking. "Seeking not our own, but another's wealth," is the social law which Christ promulgated for the practical redemption of the world. The universal application of that law would cure this running sore of the nations and the ages. Brotherhood, is the central idea of his church. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." And while the church yet preserved his spirit among them, it was said, even by their enemies: "Behold how these Christians love one another."